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UNCLAS HARARE 000984

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/S  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JFRAZER  
USDOC FOR AMANDA HILLIGAS  
TREASURY FOR OREN WYCHE-SHAW  
PASS USTR FLORIZELLE LISER  
STATE PASS USAID FOR MARJORIE COPSON

1E. O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [EAID](#) [BTIO](#) [EINV](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: GOZ FANTASY STATS

11. (SBU) Summary: The June 10 edition of the GOZ-controlled Herald reports that exports increased in 2003 over 2002 despite all signs to the contrary. End summary.

12. (SBU) Zimbabwe Central Statistics Office (CSO) reports that Zimbabwe exports rose in 2003 to hit \$2.3 trillion, or over 20 times the 2002 figure of \$110.7 billion (unadjusted for two years of hyper inflation). This, despite the tax on exporters through having to give 25% of their forex earnings at the official rate of Z\$824 to US\$1 rather than the most recent auction rate- Z\$5349.85 to US\$1. In addition, according to U.S. and European import statistics, Zimbabwe experienced a dramatic 40+ percent drop in exports to the U.S. and EU from 2002 to 2003. The article also claims \$1.5 trillion export earnings in the first four months of 2004. At the same time, the Herald reports that tobacco exports (formerly Zimbabwe's single largest export crop) are down.

13. (SBU) The Herald announced that the Zimbabwe Tourist Authority is planning Chinese language classes and has hired Chinese translators for the tourism industry. This follows the GOZ professed expectation that Chinese tourists to Zimbabwe will increase and offset the sharp decline in Western tourist arrivals since the beginning of fast track land reform.

14. (SBU) Comment: GOZ is manipulating data from the once respected CSO. The export statistics are unadjusted for inflation and touted as a sign of economic recovery. Yet, with two years of hyperinflation in the high triple digits, the figures actually represent a slow down in exports. In fact, tobacco production is now back to 1952 levels and cotton will, for the first time anyone can remember, overtake tobacco as the country's number one export crop this year.

15. (SBU) Comment cont'd: GOZ media assertions on trade are just the latest prop in Information Minister Jonathan Moyo's Potemkin Zimbabwe. Fantastical claims in recent months include increases in tourist arrivals in 2003 over 2002 and that Zimbabwe accounts for over 40% of SADC tourism. Most tourist sites are empty and SADC also offers South Africa and Mauritius- both very popular destinations for Europeans and others.

16. (SBU) Comment cont'd: GOZ hopes to dampen public dismay over the economic free fall and economic implosion over the past four years. Zanu-PF wishes to re-shape its image and prove that land reform has been successful in the run up to parliamentary elections currently scheduled for March 2005. Although the glowing portrayals are unlikely to stem the despair of most Zimbabweans, there is no sign that Zanu-PF is ready to gear-down its "good news everywhere" propaganda machine.

Whitehead